

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system for dispensing and redeeming the electronic discount coupons. The system includes a personal computer (PC) having hardware and software for receiving an electronic coupon from the system of computer networks, translating the received coupon into a binary format, and sending the binary-formatted coupon to a card-writing device. The card-writing device writes the coupon data onto a portable customer card ("smart card") approximately the size of a credit card. Subsequently, the customer goes to the store with the card. Upon completion of shopping, the customer redeems the electronic coupons at the checkout area, by inserting the card into the checkout station. During checkout, the customer is credited with the value of a coupon when UPC data from a bar code reader corresponds to a coupon stored on the card.